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# **Curios and Relics**

## **Desk Supplies**

### **Lamps Used by Lincoln**

**Excerpts from newspapers and other sources**

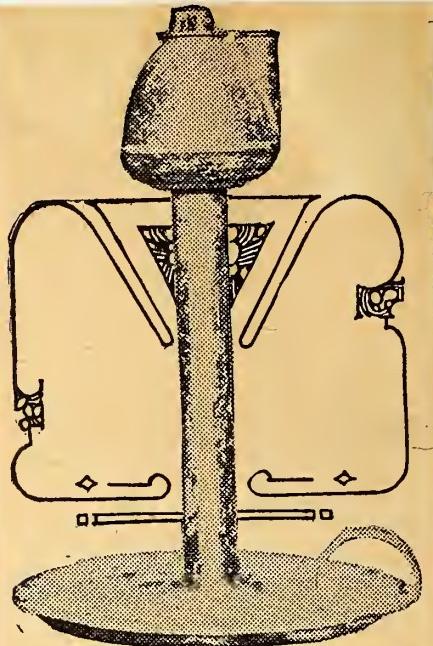
**From the files of the**  
**Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection**

## High Prices For Lincoln Relics.

A record price for a plate was brought at a sale in New York city, \$42.50 for a pale blue ironstone china plate with a little landscape in the center, a plate with no value as such, but sold as a Lincoln relic. The second record breaker was an old knife and fork, steel, with bone handles, which started at \$20 and went to \$52.50, the selling point.

The plate was used by Lincoln in his home in Springfield, Ill., in 1837, and the knife and fork at the same time. A tall tin pedestal lamp, with a double whale oil burner and acorn shaped oil font, with a tall standard and panlike base, used by Lincoln in his law office at Springfield, brought \$160, and an old chair of rather pretty shape with rush bottom brought the same price.

These four relics of the martyred president were taken by Dr. Norton, with other relics from the Lincoln log cabin, which was exhibited in New York in 1866, in lieu of fees which were to have been paid him for lecturing at the cabin. *1815*



LAMP USED BY LINCOLN IN HIS LAW OFFICE IN SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

This lamp, a tall pedestal lamp made of tin, was used by Abraham Lincoln in his law office in Springfield, Ill. It has a double whale oil burner and an acorn shaped oil font and is supported by a tall standard set in a panlike base with a handle. *1815*

New Era Mich.  
April 12-1932

Dr. Louis A. Warren  
Ft. Wayne Ind.

Dear Sir:- Having just read an article in the Oceana Herald about you wishing to hear about Lincoln relics, I would like to state that I have a bracket kitchen lamp which was given to my mother when she was married by a Mrs Thomas.

Mrs Thomas lived in Chicago when she gave the lamps to my mother I am not sure just where but I know when she died about 23 years ago she lived in Hyde Park at about 50<sup>th</sup> and Washington Blvd. I, as a little girl remember when Mrs Thomas died because my mother sent me over with 2 large vases to hold the flowers and then they took me into see her.

Mrs Thomas when she gave the lamps (there were 2 of them then) to my mother told her how she had cherished them all those years because a great man had read under them. She said when ~~Lincoln~~ Lincoln was a boy many a time he came to her house

and she gave him a slice of bread & butter and sugar and how often he had come and read under her lamps

Both the Lincolns and Thomas' lived in Springfield at that time. Mrs Thomas was afraid the lamps might be disposed of as useless and she gave them to my mother knowing they she would use them and value them.

My mother worked for Mrs Thomas but it was a close feeling of ~~friendship~~ - they had for each other.

My mother used them a good many years and when I was married she gave one to me. I am still using it in my kitchen as we live on a farm and have no electricity. There is just the front left as the original part, the burner & chimney has been replaced.

The lamp may have no significance to others but to me it has a story to tell.

Mrs Thomas cherished it because of the fact that a great man had used it and I do likewise.

sincerely

Mrs Frank C. Blohm  
New Era Michigan  
Applehurst Farm

LAMP

April 20, 1932  
Dict April 19

Mrs. Frank C. Blohm  
Applehurst Farm  
New Era, Michigan

Dear Madam:

We have been very much interested indeed in reading your letter, especially the history of your people's contact with the Lincoln family.

I do not feel, however, that we have a place in our museum for curios such as this, although it might be very much desired by those who are placing special emphasis on the household relics once in possession of the Lincolns.

If I hear of anybody desiring this lamp I will let you know.

Very sincerely yours,

Director  
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

LAW:EB

~~Sat Oct 19 1932~~

MAIL DEPARTMENT

Fairview, Oklahoma

REC'D OCT 19 1932

Answered

LIFE INSURANCE CO.

Dear Sir we received  
the folder that contained  
the picture of the Bronze  
statue of such a noble  
man as Abraham Lincoln  
it was my grandmother  
he done so much for her  
name is Hannah Armstrong  
he cleared her son of a  
murder charge which  
is so well known. he lived  
with grandma & split rails  
& studied Law by the green  
Lamp she had & grandpa  
helped carry chains to  
sawyer & when his only  
real sweet heart died  
he nearly lost his mind

Fairview, Oklahoma

Grandfather travelled for weeks on horse back to get it off his mind my mother tells so many thing that happened while he was with her mother. I certainly would enjoy a visit in your museum I have visited his monument at Springfield I'll also new Salem & enjoyed looking over the collections there I have the old gas lamp he studied by while with grandma & I wondered if you would be interested in it I had some pictures made of it will send one if you request me to. I was so sorry mother couldent attend

Fairview, Oklahoma

the dedication of the statue  
but her health and age  
was so she couldnt she  
will soon be 88 and she had  
just had a verry bad sick  
spell she is well at present  
except cold I will be glad  
to hear from you in  
regards to the lamp  
Respetfully

Mrs Dan Warner  
Homestead  
Okla

Camp Penruzel Amusing Family

October 19, 1932

Mrs. Dan Warner  
Route 2, Box 2  
Homestead, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Warner:

The enclosed form letter will explain our method of procedure in the purchase of Lincoln items. If you care to place a price upon the lamp which you have we will be pleased to let you know whether or not we care to acquire it.

Thank you very much for your information about the Lincoln history in New Salem.

Yours very truly,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director  
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

LAW/H  
Enc

11  
NOV 25 1932

November 22-32

Fairview, Oklahoma

Mr. Louis A. Warren

Kind sir

as I wrote you a month ago about the lamp I have + wish to have a home for it in some place where it would be appreciated most + would be glad to have it with you people for it would have a permanent home I am getting at the age where I will soon have to give it up I realize soon so have decided to let it go for \$200<sup>00</sup> and give all information I am able regard to it will appreciate a reply soon

Mrs Dan Warner

LAMP

November 25, 1932

Mrs. Dan Warner  
Fairview, Oklahoma

My dear Mrs. Warner:

While we thank you very much for calling to our attention the lamp in your possession, we do not feel that we could invest \$200.00 in it. Thanking you, nevertheless, for your interest in telling us about it, we are

Respectfully yours,

LAW:EB

Director  
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation

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## In a Historical House, an Auction of Lincoln Memorabilia

By NICOLE NEROULIAS  
Published February 27, 2009

**YONKERS**

Susan Farley for The New York Times

**LINCOLNIANA** Three bronze lamps, which had belonged to the family of Mary Todd Lincoln and lighted the Lincolns' wedding in 1842.

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Snyder's continuing research.

"It just worked out that way," Mr. Snyder said of the Lincoln collectibles auctioned off

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**The New York Times**



**HISTORICAL** Site of Cohasco auction house and building that once was a prison for Confederate soldiers.

Wednesday, part of a catalog of more than 500 items ranging from the Colonial to World War II era.

Of the Lincolniana, which included one of the last known photographs taken of the president at the White House, the most highly valued were three bronze lamps, originally lighted by whale oil, at \$40,000 to \$70,000 for all three. They had belonged to the family of his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and had illuminated the couple's wedding in 1842.

Those lamps had sold for less than \$2,500 in 1981, as part of Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt's estate. Through her father's lifelong research into the period and through her friendship with a descendant of Mary Todd Lincoln's family — from whom she bought the lamps in 1957 — Ms. Kunhardt amassed one of the greatest collections of

Lincolniana in her lifetime, experts say.

"My grandmother kept the lamps on the mantle over the fireplace; they were part of the family mythology," said her grandson Philip B. Kunhardt III, an author and film producer who lives in northern Westchester. "If I had lots of extra money, I would buy them back myself, because they have a lot of sentimental value."

He and his brother Peter, co-authors with Peter W. Kunhardt Jr. of "Looking for Lincoln: The Making of an American Icon" (Knopf, 2008), are moving the family's remaining collection of more than 50,000 photographs and documents to public display at the library at Purchase College this spring.

These kinds of collections have contributed to the skyrocketing prices of Lincoln artifacts, because so few are available for sale anymore, said Wayne C. Temple, chief deputy director of the Illinois State Archives and author of eight books on Lincoln. "Many of these things eventually get into a museum or a historical society, and then they're not up for auction," he said. "It's rather rare when important artifacts are in private hands and do come up for sale."

One of the Cohasco auction items, a letter dated April 26, 1865, from the mayor of Springfield, Ill., calling for work to stop for the arrival of the president's body for burial — valued at \$7,500 to \$10,000 — is the subject of some of Mr. Temple's recent research.



## Critics' Picks

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In contrast to Mr. Snyder's description of the letter as an order to stand by for the body's arrival, Mr. Temple interprets it as an order to stop preparations in Oak Ridge Cemetery because the city remained determined to bury him in a downtown monument instead, against his widow's wishes.

"The local people in Springfield had already erected a temporary tomb on the Mather property, which is now the site of our Capitol Building," said Mr. Temple, who recently finished an article about the conflict. "The letter is saying, 'We're pretty sure we're going to win with Mary and she's going to relent and let us bury him on the Mather lot.' But Mary told them they would either bury him in Oak Ridge or she would take him back to Washington, D.C."

At the close of Cohasco's auction Wednesday night, the lamps sold for \$30,250, the letter sold for \$8,250 and the photograph — valued at \$110 to \$135 — sold for \$1,320.

If the economy were better, such artifacts would have sold for even more, said Daniel Weinberg, owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago, who has dealt in Lincolniana for almost 40 years.

"The interest is quite heavy, but we're not seeing a big wave of commercialism, because people can't afford to scratch that particular itch right now," he said. "But over all, Lincolniana and other historical documents are still good long-term investments."

A version of this article appeared in print on March 1, 2009, on page WE5 of the New York edition.

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